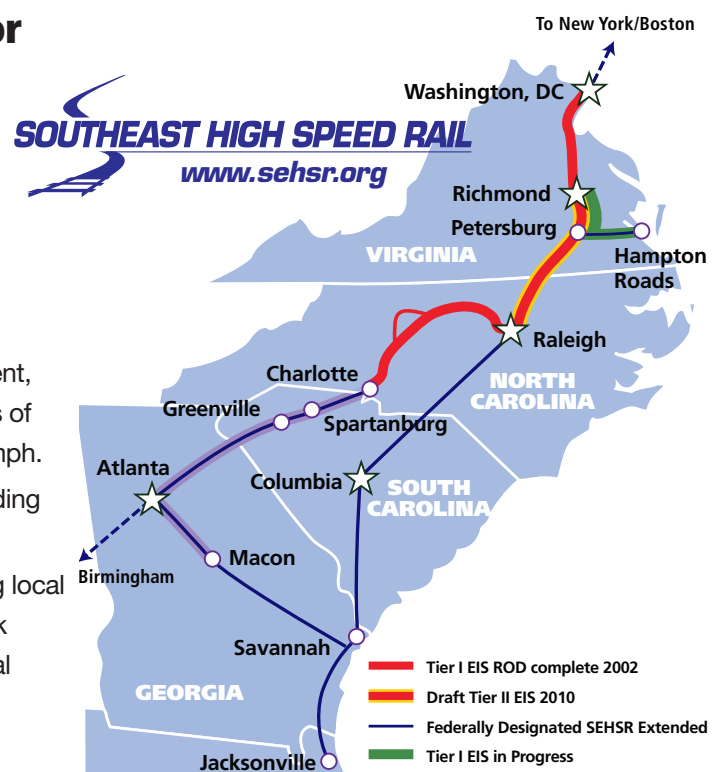




Southeast High Speed Rail Corridor

- The U.S. Department of Transportation designated Charlotte to Washington, D.C. as a high-speed rail corridor in 1992. In 1995, SEHSR was expanded east to Hampton Roads, Va., and in 1998, south to Macon, Ga. and to Jacksonville, Fl.
- North Carolina, Virginia, South Carolina and Georgia partnered to form a 4-state coalition to develop the Southeast High Speed Rail Corridor to provide frequent, reliable passenger trains that can travel at top speeds of 90–110 miles per hour, and an average speed of 86 mph.
- The corridor is being developed incrementally, upgrading existing railroad right of way.
- Benefits of the SEHSR corridor will include enhancing local economies, revitalizing urban centers, improving track safety and capacity, and contributing to environmental sustainability.



Environmental Impact Studies

- The first part of a two-part environmental study for the Washington, D.C. to Charlotte portion of the corridor was completed in October 2002. This phase used public involvement to examine the need for the project and looked at potential impacts on both natural and man-made environments along nine possible routes. A preferred corridor was determined between Washington, D.C. and Charlotte, N.C. Virginia is continuing the First Phase Environmental Analysis for high-speed rail service to Hampton Roads.
- Virginia and North Carolina are also proceeding with the next phase of the environmental study for north/south service to provide a detailed analysis on the impacts, including track location, station arrangement and design.

ARRA Applications

Through stimulus monies, NCDOT will fund over 30 projects in 11 counties for track improvements necessary to develop the SEHSR corridor. Projects include station improvements, rehabilitating locomotives and passenger equipment, and adding doubletrack, passing sidings, closing at-grade crossings and building bridges. NCDOT worked with the North Carolina Railroad Company, Norfolk Southern Railway, CSX Transportation and Amtrak to complete applications.

Existing and Future Passenger Service

- Amtrak operates 12 passenger trains serving 16 North Carolina cities daily.
- Over the past 15 years, the N.C. Department of Transportation has invested about \$300 million in the state's intercity passenger rail service, including renovation or construction of train stations, track work improvements and corridor preservation. Train travel time between Raleigh and Charlotte has been reduced by one hour.
- Intercity rail passenger ridership has increased 44 percent in the last 5 years.

Additional Mid-day Service

Currently, North Carolina's Amtrak is a fleet of two state-supported trains, the *Piedmont* and *Carolinian*, which provide daily service to Raleigh, Greensboro, Charlotte, nine other North Carolina cities and to the Northeast. Trains are sponsored by NCDOT and paid for through state funding and passenger fares. An additional mid-day round trip between Raleigh and Charlotte begins June 5 to meet increasing passenger demand.



Western North Carolina

In March 2001, NCDOT adopted a phased plan to extend passenger rail service to Asheville and Western North Carolina. The plan includes renovating or building train stations that incorporate other community uses. The department continues to work with communities on station and rail safety improvements while working to identify funding to restore passenger rail service to Western NC.

Southeastern North Carolina

In May 2001, NCDOT released results of a feasibility study that indicated there is interest in passenger rail service to and from Wilmington. In July 2005, the department released the results of more detailed studies that identified costs and needed improvements for re-establishing service to Southeastern North Carolina. The study recommended implementing passenger rail service from Raleigh to Wilmington via Fayetteville and Goldsboro in phases as funding becomes available. Other recommendations included investigating the possibility of commuter service between Selma and Raleigh and working with the State Ports to define benefits and investments needed to re-establish freight service between Goldsboro and Wilmington.

Safety Improvements

Sealed Corridor Program

Since 1992, North Carolina has received special federal funds to improve railroad crossing safety between Raleigh and Charlotte. These improvements will protect citizens and enable higher train speeds. In essence, NCDOT is "sealing" the corridor by protecting every public and private crossing with median separators, longer gate arms, four-quadrant gates and other innovative signage and traffic-control devices. The department is also safeguarding private crossings by installing improved signage and warning devices. The Federal Railroad Administration recently named the Sealed Corridor Program as the national standard for passenger train operation up to 110mph.

